the PIONEER

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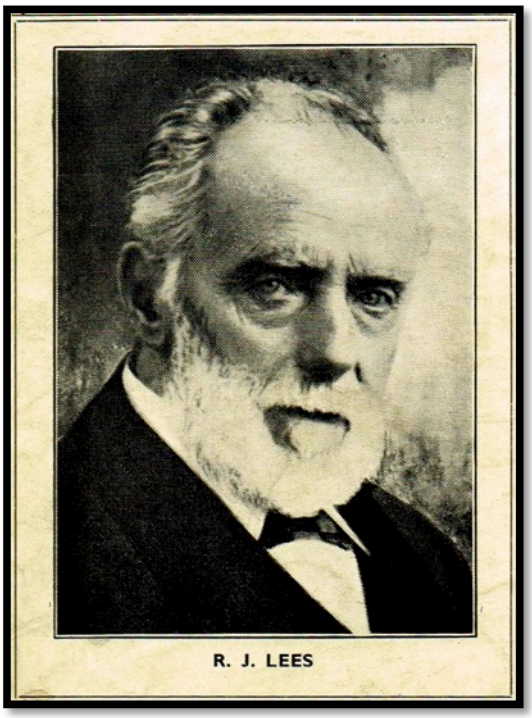
The Pioneer (bi-monthly) is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

Special thanks to Leslie Price and Charles Coulston for their work in sub-editing this issue

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Robert James Lees

1849-1931

Robert James Lees was born on August 12th 1848 in Hinckley, a market town in southwest Leicestershire; his wife, Sarah Ann, neé Bishop, was born on December 22nd 1850. They married in December 1871 and it appears they had fifteen children. Sarah died on February 19th 1912 in Ilfracombe, North Devon; Lees died, aged 81 years, on January 11th 1931 in Leicester, where he was cremated. His ashes were interred in Ilfracombe Score cemetery in his wife's grave on Saturday January 16th 1931. Photographs of Lees on his death and the numerous floral tributes and further information can be seen on Stephen Butt's excellent Robert James Lees website, which contains a considerable amount of researched information.[1]

On the death of his wife in 1912 Lees became very close to his eldest daughter, Evelyn (Eva) Florence, born in 1879 in Camberwell, Surrey; Eva Lees died in Leicester on March 28th 1968. In the Britten Memorial Museum & Library at Stansted Hall there is a large, framed photograph of Eva and her father. Prior to her death she bequeathed many of her father's personal items to the Arthur Findlay College Library, including his desk, which can be noted on the above footnote. More senior visitors to the Arthur Findlay College may recall that Lees' desk resided in the Gallery for some years. Other items include his letter-opener, diaries, address book, letter-rack, postage scales, lead crystal inkwell, his books and a striking 'Crown of Thorns', covered in a glass dome; also some manuscripts with his notations to some of his published works, and numerous personal letters, some relating to his healing work in Ilfracombe, etc.[2]



Today this is displayed in the Britten Memorial Museum & Library at Stansted Hall:

'The R. J. Lees Corner'

[1] Robert James Lees: http://rjlees.co.uk/death.htm Home page: "An objective investigation and assessment of the life and work of author, journalist, social reformer and spiritualist, Robert James Lees": http://rjlees.co.uk/

[2] Photograph of the R. J. Lees corner taken by Janette Marshall.

As Curator of the Britten Memorial Museum I am often asked two questions:

Did he really sit for Queen Victoria as a young boy?

Lees' involvement with the 1888 Jack the Ripper case?

As neither of these two stories is fully built on solid factual ground and, given that the Museum deals in facts and researched material rather than speculation, it is difficult to give a definitive answer. I came across the article published below while sorting out the "Two Worlds" donation cited in the last issue from Tony Ortzen and the directors of the "Two Worlds". It is taken from May 14th 1937 and is very interesting, but the reader will note that it does not have a single reference and makes a rather sweeping statement:

> *It is well known, of course, that it was the mediumship of R. J. Lees which enabled the discovery and bringing to heel of the famous "Jack the Ripper," but it is not generally known that it was the sincere concern of the Prince Consort over the long list of crimes which were creating unrest in London which led him to influence Mr. Lees in the discovery of the culprit.*

We are not given the article author's name – just from "a Special Correspondent". Problems arise within the Spiritualist movement when these stories over the years are looked upon and spoken on as *'factual events',* although often there are seeds of truth and possibilities within the claims:

HE SAT FOR QUEEN VICTORIA

The exclusive story of the famous medium who sat for a Queen and who was later invited to visit the Empress of Germany.



QUEEN VICTORIA'S interest in Spiritualism is fairly well known, and it is common property that she had a number of sittings with Robert James Lees, author of *Through the Mists*, etc.

It is not generally known that R. J. Lees was but a boy when Queen Victoria first sent for him. He lived in Birmingham at the time, and attended a Sunday-school, of which Mr. Aaron Franklin was the superintendent. In the late fifties Franklin heard of the table rappings which had set America aflame. He tried a number of experiments at home. It was just at this time that R. J. Lees had one or two psychical experiences, which were related to Franklin, with the result that Aaron invited young Lees and his father to one of the seances. At the first séance R. J. Lees dropped off to sleep, and in the trance state alluded to facts which he could not possibly have known. His own

brother spoke to him. This was in the year 1862, when Lees was but thirteen years of age.

Aaron Franklin sent for James Burns, then the editor of The *Medium and Daybreak*,[3] and at the seance which ensued a spirit controlled R. J. Lees, and claimed to be the Prince Consort, who died in 1861.[4] He instructed them to send a message to Queen Victoria. It was conveyed to the Court, with the result that two gentlemen came down to Birmingham to investigate. They gave no names, but were invited to a sitting. As soon as the seance opened they were both addressed by name by someone purporting to be the Prince Consort. He greeted them masonically, and requested them to take a message to the Queen. This they consented to do, provided he (the control) would sign it. The Prince Consort signed the message, and his signature was so satisfactory that a fortnight later R. J. Lees received a command to visit Windsor. Mr. Lees (Senr.) was rather appalled at the prospect. On consulting the Prince Consort, however, he was told that if Queen Victoria would get John Brown (the Prince's former gillie) to Windsor they would develop him, but if at any time she could not get a message through she was to send for the boy.


John Brown

Four or five seances were given to the Queen by R. J. Lees between 1862 and 1864, at each of which the Prince Consort communicated. Thereafter, John Brown was Queen Victoria's medium, and appears to have carried on successfully. In the early months of 1900, however, visitors from Queen Victoria came to St. Ives, where R. J. Lees was on holiday, to take him up for another sitting. The Queen passed away twelve months later.

On another occasion he had an urgent call from Germany to visit the Empress of Germany (the Princess Royal), who wished to consult him in a matter of serious illness in the family. Sir Morell Mackenzie and Sir James Pager dissuaded him from going.

It may be wondered why the Royal seances ended abruptly about 1868. The fact is, R. J. Lees attended a seance where fraud was evident and he severed all connection with the Movement, and even took the platform as an anti-Spiritualist, appearing on the platform with the Rev. Thomas Ashcroft to denounce the Movement. Two years later, however, his mediumship strengthened, and as a result of pressure by the guides he came back into the Movement, and offered to debate with Ashcroft, an offer which was refused.

Mr. Lees was always excellently received, and treated as an equal in his various visits to Court. Several members of the Royal family showed signs of possessing mediumship, and especially the Princess Alice.

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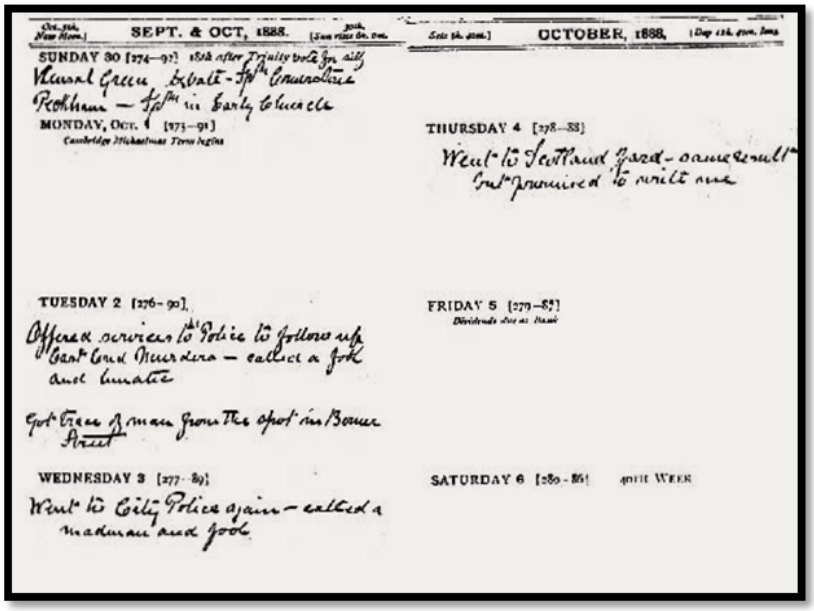
[3] The "Medium and Daybreak" did not start until April 8th 1870. In 1862 Burns started "The Progressive Library" from his cottage in Camberwell.

[4] When Prince Albert breathed his last at 10.50pm on the night of Saturday 14 December 1861 at Windsor, a telegraph message was sent within the hour to the Lord Mayor that the great bell of St Paul's Cathedral should toll out the news across London. Everyone knew that this sound signified one of two things: the death of a monarch or a moment of extreme national crisis such as war. BBC History Magazine: Google "History extra – Prince Albert: The death that rocked the monarchy."

It is well known, of course, that it was the mediumship of R. J. Lees which enabled the discovery and bringing to heel of the famous "Jack the Ripper," but it is not generally known that it was the sincere concern of the Prince Consort over the long list of crimes which were creating unrest in London which led him to influence Mr. Lees in the discovery of the culprit.

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A referenced account of the Rev. Thomas Ashcroft affair is published in Psypioneer, Volume 5, No. 12, December 2009: "Robert James Lees and the Revd Thomas Ashcroft – Stephen Butt".


SEPT. & OCT, 1888. OCTOBER, 1888.

SUNDAY 30 [274–92] 18th after Trinity Holy Eu. all
Mutual Green & Walt – 3p.m Conversation
Rotherham – 4p.m in Early Church

MONDAY, OCT. 1 [275–91]
Cambridge Michaelmas Term begins

THURSDAY 4 [278–88]
Went to Scotland Yard – same result
but promised to write me

TUESDAY 2 [276–90]
Offered services to Police to follow up
East End Murders – called a fool
and lunatic

Got trace of man from the spot in Berner
Street

FRIDAY 5 [279–87]
Dividends due at Bank

WEDNESDAY 3 [277–89]
Went to City Police again – called a
madman and fool

SATURDAY 6 [280–86] 40TH WEEK

The claim that Robert James Lees worked with the police and identified Jack the Ripper holds no known factual evidence; it should be noted that Robert James Lees, the police and Spiritualist publications, etc. made no public statement about Lees giving assistance in the Whitechapel Murders in 1888. The only *actual factual* evidence of Lees' interest in the murders is when he offered his assistance to the local police and Scotland Yard and was turned down, being called a "madman and fool", "fool and lunatic", etc. This was recorded in his personal diary and written in his own hand. The diaries were part of the Lees Bequest to the Arthur Findlay College. Unfortunately, the 1888 diary was taken from the Museum some years ago, though, fortunately, a copy was made, as shown above.

Tuesday October 2nd 1888

Offered services to police to follow up East End Murders – called a "fool and lunatic"

Got trace of man from spot near Berner Street

Wednesday October 3rd 1888

Went to City Police again – called a "madman and fool"

Thursday October 4th 1888

Went to Scotland Yard – same result but they promised to write me

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Below is quoted from Psypioneer, Volume 5, No. 12, December 2009:

Journalists reporting on the series of murders in the Whitechapel area of London gave the perpetrator a name, Jack the Ripper. Seven years after that 'autumn of terror', Lees' name was to be forever associated with those events because of the publication of an article in a Chicago newspaper

"The article was published by the Chicago Sunday Times-Herald on 28th April, 1895. At the heart of this story is the claim that over a number of years,[5] Lees was seized by visions of the Ripper and his murders. They each came true.

Lees, it was said, went abroad and briefly was not troubled by such visions. He returned to London and when on an omnibus with his wife, saw a man get on the bus at Notting Hill. Lees told his wife that he believed the man to be the Ripper. Lees' wife laughed at him. When the man alighted at Marble Arch, Lees followed him, informing a constable *en route* about his fears. The constable laughed at Lees. The next day, and after another vision, Lees went to Scotland Yard. Lees remembered a postcard from his vision, and the police received one that morning which read as Lees stated. They then took him seriously.

Eventually, after more murders, Lees was able to lead the police to the house of the Ripper. The Ripper was a doctor who lived in a fashionable house in London. The Ripper was placed in an asylum under the name Thomas Mason No.124 in place of a pauper, and a mock funeral held. It claims that a Dr Howard recounted the tale whilst drunk to a man who then informed the newspaper.

The newspaper report describes a séance in detail involving Lees and two American visitors to London. It is obvious that the Chicago journalist is drawing upon Lees' own words as published in LIGHT in 1886, not the least the re-appearance of Mr S and Mr B:[6]

> "Mr Lees returned to England where he made the acquaintance of Roland B. Shaw, a mining stockbroker, of New York and Fred C. Beckwith, of Broadhead, Wisconsin who was then the financial promoter of an American syndicate in London.
>
> These three gentlemen were dining one day in the Criterion when Mr Lees turned to his two companions suddenly and exclaimed: 'Great God! Jack the Ripper has committed another murder.' Mr Shaw looked at his watch and found it was eleven minutes to eight. At ten minutes past eight a policeman discovered the body of a woman in Crown court, in the Whitechapel district, with her throat cut from ear to ear and her body bearing all the marks of the Ripper's handiwork. Mr Lees and his companions at once went to Scotland Yard. The news of the murder had not yet reached the inspector, but while Mr Lees was relating his story, a telegram arrived giving full details of the outrage."

Many other details in the Chicago article indicate that the writer or writers had access to a source of personal information about Lees. American journalists would have seen the daily wires from London about the Ripper Murders and were as informed about them as

[5] This is a strange remark, as the (known) Jack the Ripper murders were committed in the space of a few months in 1888: "*At the heart of this story is the claim that over a number of years, Lees was seized by visions of the Ripper and his murders. They each came true.*"

[6] See Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 2009: "Spiritualism and its opponents". Light, May 22nd 1886.

their counterparts in London, but specific family details about Lees and of his work, and his address in the London suburbs also found their way into the spurious article.

In 1895, Lees was busy with his latest enterprise, the People's League which supported many hundreds of needy families in the Peckham area of London. A 'glorious mission' was how Lees described it in his diary, and with its many self-help Socialist-based policies and projects, it was having a real effect on the people of that area. Within a few months of the publication of the Chicago article in several English newspapers, he had suffered a breakdown. Lees left London for the peace and relative anonymity of the fishing port of St Ives in Cornwall, taking his large family with him. The People's League closed its doors, never to re-open. Lees ever eschewed the limelight and a role of leadership."

Sometimes our Pioneers are reluctantly pivoted into the spotlight, which sometimes overshadows their true work.

Robert James Lees should be remembered as a Spiritualist medium, lecturer, social reformer, healer and writer.

Did Robert James Lees really sit for Queen Victoria as a young boy? Again, a visit to Stephen Butt's website, as cited elsewhere in this article, is recommended. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote to Lees asking him if the story:

"could be put on record […]. We are all growing older & it would be good to leave a clear record behind."

Whether or not Doyle received a reply we can only speculate; however, Lees never publicly confirmed the story.

This whole article on Robert James Lees came about when I was looking for an unrelated reference in Arthur Findlay's autobiography, "Looking Back", published in 1955. I came across the alleged story of Lees sitting with Queen Victoria on pages 407-411, when Mr and Mrs Findlay were invited to meet two of Robert James Lees' children, Eva Lees, his eldest daughter, and his son, Claude Lees (1884-1965), who both resided in Leicester. Eva and Claude launched the Leicester Centre for Psychic Research in the early 1950s. Given that Arthur Findlay took notes of their meeting, later asking Claude and Eva to check what he recorded, this is probably the closest report we have to the events surrounding the early mediumship of their father and his possible royal connection, but it still remains unsupported by any documented evidence.

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Arthur Findlay stated:



When we were at Rockingham Castle, which is about thirty miles from Leicester, my wife and I motored there by invitation to pay a short visit to this lady and gentleman, Miss Eva Lees and her brother, Mr. Lees. The latter is a well-known photographer in that city. They welcomed us and kindly gave us tea, while Miss Lees told us their story. Her father was Robert James Lees, a man well known and respected in Leicester. I took notes of all Miss Lees told me, wrote out a report, and sent it to her for her and her brother to check and return to me. What follows is my record of what she told me, and I think that most people will agree with me that such an interesting story is well worth preserving.

A fact worthy of mention, and one which is quite unknown to historians, is the interest Queen Victoria took in Spiritualism, even before the death of her husband.[7] The following facts are recorded because she was a prominent woman, and not for any other reason, her experience being typical of what hundreds of thousands of people have also discovered. Her deep interest began shortly after the death of her husband the Prince Consort, and this is how it happened.

Robert James Lees (1849-193I), then a boy of about thirteen years of age, was so mediumistic from early childhood that his family and friends were converted to the belief that discarnate men and women spoke through him when in a state of trance. Soon after the death of the Prince in 1861, while the Lees family was having a private sitting in their own home, Robert Lees was controlled by a man from the other world who gave the name of Albert, the Prince Consort He then made the request that Queen Victoria be told that he could communicate with her through this boy medium.

The editor of a newspaper, a friend of the Lees family was present at this séance, and published this request purporting to come from the late Prince Albert through Lees while in trance. This came to the notice of Queen Victoria who, prior to her husband's death, had been convinced by her experiences with other mediums that such communication was possible. So she sent anonymously two members of her court to the home of Lees, who requested that they might have a sitting with him. They did not mention who they were, or from whom they came, and gave assumed names, but the boy was not long in trance before the Prince Consort purported to speak, and he greeted these two courtiers as his friends, calling them by their correct names.

Then the boy in trance shook hands with them, and gave them correctly the highest Masonic handshake, which normally he did not know. The Prince, through the boy who was in trance, then told the visitors that he knew they had come from Queen Victoria, and, though at first they denied it, he forced them by the evidence he gave of his identity to admit that this was so. Before the séance ended he had given them such accurate

[7] See Psypioneer, Vol. 1, Nos. 15/16, July/August 2005: "Georgiana Eagle – Queen Victoria's Clairvoyant Revealed", by Stephen Butt.

information, which only the Prince Consort could have known (some of it being of a very private nature, known only to the Queen), that when her envoys returned to Windsor she was quite satisfied that these communications could have come only from her husband. She was especially impressed by a letter the boy wrote when controlled by the Prince. This was of a particularly personal nature, and he then signed it by a unique name used only by the Prince in letters to the Queen when he was on earth.

She then sent for Lees, and asked him if he would give her a sitting, which he did, and the Prince again spoke through the medium. The Queen then said to her husband that she wanted Lees to remain permanently at Court so that he would be available at all times, but the Prince objected, saying that he did not wish this boy to be his medium. He, however, told the Queen that he could speak to her equally well, and just as easily, by using the vocal organs of the son of a gillie on the Balmoral estate whose name was John Brown. The Queen immediately sent for Brown, and thus began the long and strange friendship of Queen Victoria with John Brown who, up to his death, was used as the medium of the Prince Consort to communicate with his wife, whom he advised on many questions until her death.

Robert James Lees, when he grew up, became a highly respected journalist and author. He wrote several books, of which the best known is *Through the Mists*, it being a record of the communications he believed he had received from the etheric world. Queen Victoria ordered six specially bound copies, which she presented to members of her family. The acquaintance of the Queen with Lees did not end with their first meeting, in fact it continued throughout her lifetime, and on five different occasions the Prince Consort spoke through him in the presence of the Queen. Shortly before she died she sent for Lees and thanked him for all he had done for her. From time to time she offered him honours, a comfortable annuity for his lifetime and gifts, all of which he refused. He would take nothing, he said, in return for his services.

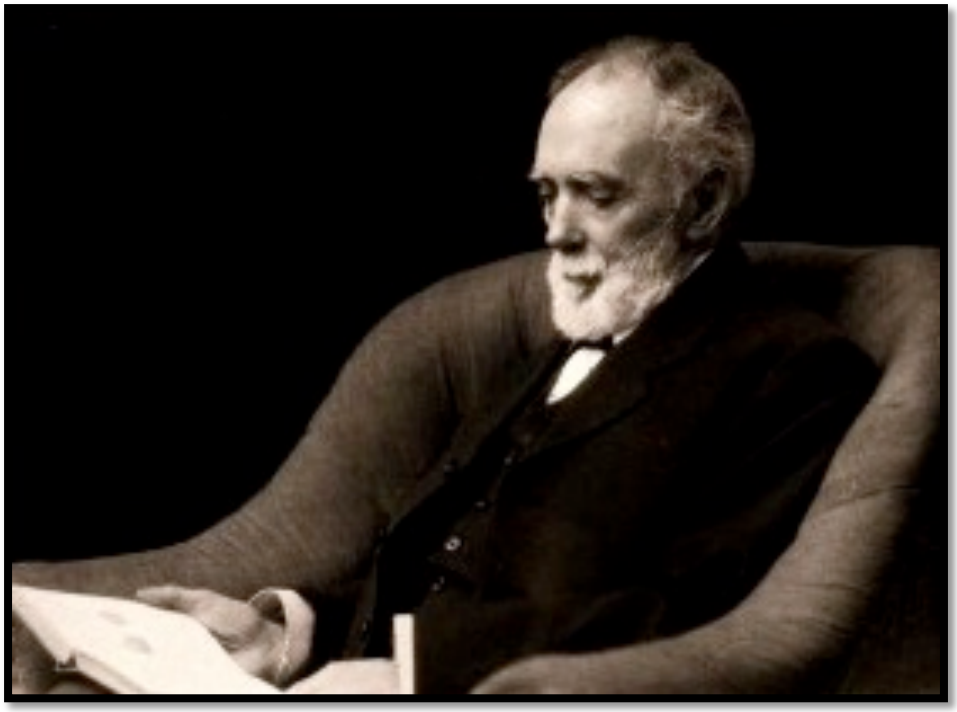
The Queen, knowing the prejudice there was at Court, and by the Church, towards everything relating to Spiritualism, never wrote to Lees and always sent her messages by a special courier, but she kept a record of all that transpired at her sittings with both John Brown and Lees. Dr. Davidson, the Dean of Windsor, who afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury, was always hostile towards the lady who carried the title of "Defender of the Faith" being so unorthodox, but she entirely ignored his advice to discontinue her communications with her husband, and brought up the members of her family to believe in the principles of Spiritualism. That is why the Royal Family have had sittings from time to time with the world's leading mediums.

After John Brown's death the Queen wrote a monograph about him and wished to publish it. Dr. Davidson and Sir Henry Ponsonby, her Private Secretary, firmly objected to this proposal, the former threatening to resign his position as Court Chaplain. Moreover, Ponsonby destroyed Brown's private diaries, so that what was written therein would never become known. Thus it was that the influence of two Court officials prevented the Queen from publicly testifying to the comfort she had received from the communications she believed she had had with her husband, through the mediumship of her highland gillie.

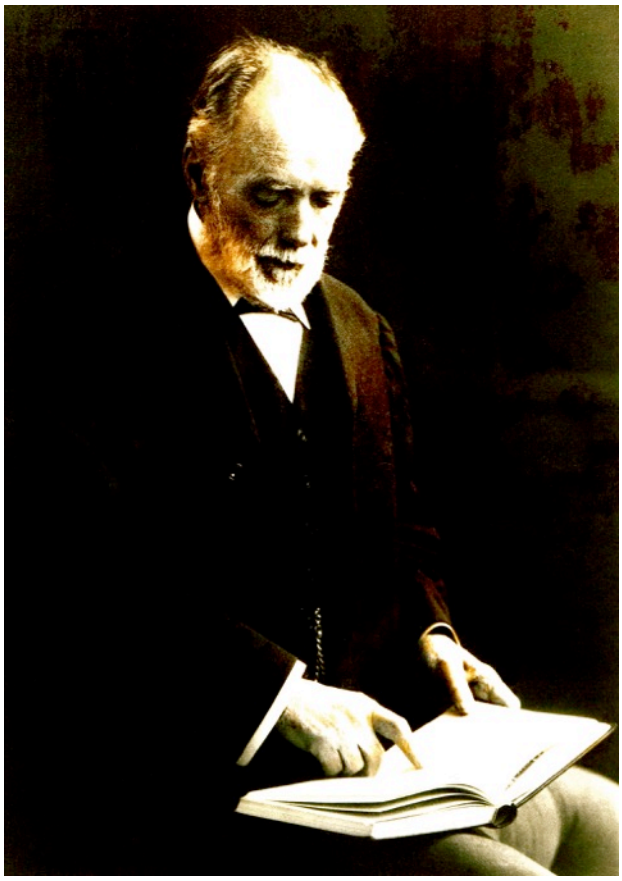
Lees never spoke to anyone outside of his own family about his close contact with Queen Victoria, or of her communications with her husband, and consequently only the members of his family knew what was happening, and this they only spoke about to a few of their friends. I am grateful to Miss Lees for the trouble she took to give me the information I desired, and also for her and her brother's kindness in allowing me to make public what they had up till then considered a private matter.



Robert James Lees, Eva and Claude



So what can be concluded?



The story of Robert James Lees' sittings with Queen Victoria remains hearsay to the present day; there appear to be no official or documented records. As late as just two years before Lees' death, Arthur Conan Doyle wrote to Lees asking him to put his story on record – but Lees remained publicly silent. It is probable, however, that owing to the nature of trance mediumship in the royal household he would have been sworn to secrecy, as claimed by his daughter, and with the passage of time he may have revealed his story to his family and left them to be the storyteller!

It can be noted in the first article cited above that Aaron Franklin sent for James Burns. The article states that Burns was "then the editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*"; this in fact is incorrect, as it would be around another eight years before Burns started the weekly Spiritualist publication, *Medium and Daybreak,* in 1870. It is certainly interesting that James Burns, who a few years later would become a household name in Spiritualism, was at the séance when the communicating spirit:

> "… claimed to be the Prince Consort, who died in 1861. He instructed them to send a message to Queen Victoria. It was conveyed to the Court, with the result that two gentlemen came down to Birmingham to investigate.

Stephen Butt reliably informs me: "It was claimed by Eva that James Burns published an account in the 'Medium and Daybreak'…" If this were in fact the case, it would be the most valuable, independent report. Hopefully, I will be able to find this and publish it in the next issue.

It is also claimed by Eva Lees that Queen Victoria talked to Lees regarding the Jack the Ripper murders and her father received a pension from the Privy Purse for his services to the Queen. This claim seems to have been given by Eva Lees after her father's death in 1931.

The Whitechapel Jack the Ripper case involving Robert James Lees is shrouded in mystery, contradiction, and false reporting in the national and Spiritualist press, stated as *factual*:

> "It is well known, of course, that it was the mediumship of R. J. Lees which enabled the discovery and bringing to heel of the famous "Jack the Ripper," "

Up until 1895 there is no public mention of Lees or any other medium for that matter being named as helping the police with the Whitechapel murders. The author of the Chicago Sunday Times-Herald article, who named Lees as being involved, is unknown. The full article is available on Stephen Butt's website, as previously given. A short quote reads:



"One day, while riding in an omnibus from shepherd's Bush in company with his wife, he experienced a renewal of the strange sensations which had preceded his former clairvoyant condition. The omnibus ascending Notting Hill. It stopped at the top, and a man entered the interior of the vehicle. Mr Lees at once experienced a singular sensation. Looking up he perceived that the new passenger was a man of medium size. He noticed that he was dressed in a dark suit of Scotch tweed, over which he wore a light overcoat. He had a soft felt hat on his head.

Over a year had elapsed since Mr Lees' clairvoyant vision, but the picture of the murderer had been indelibly impressed upon his mind. Leaning over to his wife he remarked earnestly, 'That is Jack the Ripper,' his wife laughed at this, and told him not to be foolish. 'I am not mistaken,' replied Mr Lees, 'I feel it.' The omnibus traversed the entire length of the Edgware road, turning into Oxford street at the marble arch. At this point the man in the light overcoat got out.

Mr Lees determined to follow him. Bidding his wife continue on her journey in the direction of home, he followed the man down Park lane. About half way down the thoroughfare he met a constable, to whom he pointed out the man in the light overcoat informing him that he was the dreaded 'ripper' and asking that he be arrested. The constable laughed at him, and threatened to 'run him in.' It seems that the 'ripper' must have entertained some apprehension that he was in danger, for on reaching Apsley House he jumped into a cab and was driven rapidly down Piccadilly …".

Only a few points are highlighted here from the 1895 paper report:

There is no evidence to substantiate any of the claims involving Robert James Lees but there are some double-barrelled parallels worthy of mention.

In Lees' interview published in Light, 1886, he talks about his American aquaintances, Mr S and Mr B; it was while giving these two gentlemen a series of sittings in London that he re-established himself as a medium – in the 1895 Chicago article they are again mentioned and with Lees in London when Lees is alleged to have said, "Great God! Jack the Ripper has committed another murder." See Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 2009.

Lees and Sarah married in 1871. She would have been fully aware of her husband's visions, etc, so why on the omnibus, when her husband allegedly said, "That is Jack the Ripper," did his wife laugh at this and tell him not to be foolish?



Did she consider her husband's work as a medium foolish and doubt his abilities? Or did Sarah Lees laugh at her husband, calling him foolish, because she possibly recognised the gentleman – whom it is alleged he later found?

The Scotch tweed suit and a soft felt hat would indicate a gentleman of mid- to upper class, as shown in the Victorian image.

Lees made three entries in his personal 1888 diary, as shown elsewhere in this article. Eva Lees gave these as part of the Lees Bequest to the Arthur Findlay College in the late 1960s; Eva died in 1968. It is my understanding that the information was not made public until the 1970s. Lees' three entries give the only documented link of his personal interest and the offer of his services to assist the police in the apprehension of the Whitechapel murderer.

The entries are dated October 2nd, 3rd & 4th 1888, after the murder of Catherine Eddowes, the fourth victim, on September 30th 1888. Lees' entry for Thursday October 4th 1888 reads: "Went to Scotland Yard – same result but they promised to write me." The next victim was Mary Jane Kelly, murdered on November 9th 1888.

By Lees' own hand, it is clear that up to Thursday October 4th 1888 he had had 'no input into the Whitechapel Ripper murders'. So the only murder and possible apprehension of the killer which Robert James Lees could have been involved in *officially* with the police must have been on November 9th 1888 and the murder of Mary Jane Kelly. Generally, Lees' diary is looked upon as disappointing, as it holds no information about the case. However, in my opinion it is in fact the best and only documented evidence of his involvement, as it gives a time frame which would involve only one murder, that of Mary Jane Kelly.

The 1895 Chicago story states:

> Lees' exclaimed "'Great God! Jack the Ripper has committed another murder.' Mr Shaw looked at his watch and found it was eleven minutes to eight.[8] At ten minutes past eight a policeman discovered the body of a woman in Crown court, in the Whitechapel district, with her throat cut from ear to ear and her body bearing all the marks of the Ripper's handiwork."

Out of all the five victims "Crown Court" was not a murder site; the last victim was the most brutal of them all. The five (canonical) victims between August 31st and November 9th 1888 are the generally accepted Ripper murders but some historians suggest there were other alleged Ripper victims. Given that the 1895 article gives no dates, there is no way of confirming any of the rather mixed report. The report suggests that Lees was involved in all the murders. This may well have been the case with regard to his clairvoyant perception but in Lees' only known documented input he tells us his offers of any official help with the police were rejected up until Thursday October 4th 1888.

There are other considerations still to be viewed but, owing to space, this will be continued in the next issue.

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[8] One of his American acquaintances.

HARRY DAWSON

Spiritualists' National Union President 1953 – 1958

The "Two Worlds" announced, July 4th 1953:



HARRY DAWSON, who becomes the new president of the Spiritualists' National Union, is one of the old guard, for he has already served under six presidents.

He was reared in the Church of England, but his questioning mind could not accept its doctrines and he became more or less an agnostic. His introduction to our subject was his reading of "Spirit Teachings," by Stainton Moses, regarded by many as our bible.

This was followed by study of another great book, "Harmonial Philosophy," by Andrew Jackson Davis, founder of the Lyceum movement, which caters for Spiritualist youth.

VARIED OFFICES

Dawson joined a Spiritualist church at Crewe, where he met the famous Billy Hope, the psychic photographer. Then he was moved north and gave years of service in various offices at Gateshead. Here he made his mark on the Northern District Council, which led to his appointment as its area representative to the national council.

For some years he acted as president of the Northern District Council. Together with Ernest Thompson, former Editor of *Two Worlds*, he founded the Newcastle Psychical Research Institute.

Because of his interest in healing, a subject to which he has devoted many years, Dawson was asked by the S.N.U. to take over the secretaryship of the committees which looked after education, exponents and healing.

During his years of service to our cause, he was always puzzled by the unhappy relationship that existed between the S.N.U. and the Lyceum movements, now happily a memory of teething troubles, because both organisations have been cemented in a bond of understanding.

EDUCATION'S APPEAL

His own children were trained in the Lyceum and absorbed teachings which were of great value not only to them but to him. It is thus understandable that Dawson has spent so much time on the S.N.U.'s educational activities.

He is fortunate in that his wife is just as an enthusiastic Spiritualist as he is and has been his faithful companion in all his years of service.

"I am an admirer of Emma Hardinge Britten, A. J. Davis, Hudson Tuttle and, Alfred Kitson, pioneers of an age which to many is but a distant memory," he says.

Today the name Harry Dawson is little known and it is difficult to find any significant biographical information on him and his mediumship. Dawson came into Spiritualism in 1913. Some indication of Dawson's mediumship can be gained from the "Two Worlds", April 23rd 1937, on the "Readers Page", by A. Reynolds (D.N.U.), Ipswich, quoted below:

"I joined the Movement, and became a member of Eden Progressive Church in Gateshead, where Mr. Dawson was president.[9] He was perhaps the most outstanding trance speaker and healing medium in the North. Fine addresses in big, rolling sentences, illustrating spirit-life, laws and philosophy, were expressed through him on the platform. These lectures by the spirit-doctor were very illuminating—a joy to all thoughtful spiritualists, but like other prophets the honour which was his due was not accorded him. He was too near to us and our times.

"I shall never forget the uniquely intimate conversations we had with Mr. Dawson's controls—Red Eagle, the Doctor and Joe; as well as numerous other entities who were passed through the medium for instruction, awakening and rescue. The weekly circles, held in my home for some years, were characterised by simplicity, friendship and tolerance. There was nothing "religious" about them, no hymn-singing or prayers; just conversation on the subject so near and so dear to our hearts—Spiritualism.

"While talking or tinkering with the wireless—then in its infancy,—for Dawson is an electrician, he would slip quietly under control and a spirit-visitor would be joining in the conversation.

"His body, which I often felt in the first stages of control, was of icy coldness, and hard and solid as frozen meat. The characteristics of the controlling entity followed. With the Indian Chief a lengthening by some 8 inches or 9 inches, so that trousers became almost knee breeches, and waistcoat almost bursting with chest and shoulder expansion; the Doctor produces slimming and contraction, with concave chest; and Joe, foreshortening, stooping, etc."

"Joe, another control, was although perhaps less progressive, a very valuable guide regarding mundane affairs. Joe loved to predict when allowed to do so. The higher guides, however, believed Joe's predictions tended to make things too easy for us. They would, they said, weaken rather than strengthen our character. We must face up to life and solve our own problems. We learned more of the lower spirits and their struggles towards the higher spheres from Joe than from any of the others. They had progressed—he was still too near the earth."

—~—☼—~—

[9] Eden Progressive National Spiritualist Church, Rectory Hall, Cuthbert's Place, Bensham, Gateshead was founded in November 1897. On September 22nd-28th 1997 it celebrated its Centenary; the speakers, demonstrators, etc. included SNU President Judith Seaman, Duncan Gascoyne, Mary Duffy and Coral Polge. Spiritualism in Gateshead can be traced back at least to the early 1880s with the 'Gateshead Society for the Investigation of Spiritualism'.

Below is an interesting profile by Philip Paul, published in the "Two Worlds", April 7th 1956, page 7:

HARRY DAWSON



THE case of the First Gentleman of British Spiritualism provides an example that time works many wonders.

In his childhood, well-meaning parents invested him with their own faith and an adherence to Church of England orthodoxy. But the passage of the years bestowed the ability to reason, and dissatisfaction replaced his unthinking acceptance.

For a time he cast about in search of a rock upon which to build a new belief, but none was forthcoming. In the course of his quest he encountered the claims of Spiritualism. Perhaps it was because they offered too much hope that they were rejected, unexamined.

Became agnostic

Though arbitrary, it was a determined verdict. He decided that he was "very opposed" to Spiritualist practices and beliefs. Thereafter, he became an agnostic, adrift, like so many others among his fellow-creatures, without port or anchor against the storms of life.

It was his wife who wrought a change. One day, she told him they were to be visited by a friend of hers, a medium who would provide them with private sittings. He did all but refuse the visitor admission to the house. But having succumbed to one feminine blandishment it was a foregone conclusion that he would weaken to another. He had his sitting—and amazing evidence of the survival of his father, who had passed 20 years before.

So he set out upon the road that was to lead him to the highest office among the Spiritualists of Britain—and an inheritance of one farthing. For many years that most humble of coins was the symbol of office carried by the president of the Spiritualists' National Union—the post now held by the salutary septuagenarian of whom you are reading. *

Born in Bolton, Harry Dawson was the first of seven children. Soon after his "arrival" in Spiritualism came the first world war. He was stationed in Gateshead and given work in connection with the development of apparatus for warning the public of approaching Zeppelins.

At the end of 1918, he joined the Gateshead Rectory Hall Spiritualist Church, where he later became president. Next, he was elected to the northern district council of the SNU. Again, he climbed to presidency.[10] Twenty-one years ago, he joined the national council. And once more he has attained the presidential chair.

[10] It can be noted that on the Northern District Council web page it gives H. Dawson, President 1943-1947.

He has a touching memory of this last achievement. “My wife was weeping but smiling when she brought me the telegram. It said, ‘Congratulations to the new president.’ ” Alas, Mrs. Dawson was to share her husband’s success for only a few months. She passed in October, l953—leaving instructions that there were to be no flowers at her funeral and asking that the money which would have been spent on them be donated to the SNU fund of benevolence for which she had striven for many years.[11]

There was early evidence of his wife’s survival. At a seance with Elsie Hardwick, he received a communication which he remembers as “just as if my wife had been there, speaking in the room.”[12]

William Hope, the psychic photographer was instrumental in encouraging Harry’s interest in the Movement. Since those days of introduction. Harry has taken a keen interest in direct voice and materialisation activities. Once, at a sitting with a male medium, there was a full-length materialisation of an unclothed female figure. When Harry subsequently announced himself as satisfied of the genuineness of this phenomenon; he was told that what he had seen might, in fact, have been a masquerade by the medium himself.

Harry laughed. “That isn’t so,” he said, “and I should know.” Having spent most of his working life as a professional physiotherapist, he has some pride in his ability to distinguish the anatomy of the female from that of the male!

With thinning hair and aquiline features, he retains traces of his northern accent. Shrewd and with an underlying energy that makes nonsense of his years, he carries high hopes for the future of Spiritualism. Last year, his presidential duties involved him in 300 journeys all over the country. Not once in the 12 months was he at his Wragby, Lincolnshire, home for two weeks in succession.

His inquiring mind prompted a number of experiments by way of combining spiritual healing with his physiotherapy. A number of successes were achieved. Another result of these experiments is Harry’s conviction that many of the hand-passes used in healing are unnecessary.

Each of his children—a son and two daughters—has been “born and bred in Spiritualism.” Convinced that the future of the Movement rests with the young people of today, Harry emphasises the importance of educational activities and implements his belief in his Union policy. In addition to his SNU duties, he is a member of the executive council of the International Spiritualist Federation and SNU spokesman on the Spiritualists’ Council for Common Action.

Despite the legislative achievements attained on behalf of British Spiritualists in 1952, Harry does not consider Spiritualist freedom complete. “We have much to fight for yet,” he says.

Among his recent activities has been participation in negotiations which have resulted in J. Arthur Findlay’s promise to bequeath his country home, Stansted Hall, to the movement for

[11] The Fund of Benevolence (FOB) was founded by Mrs Minnie Harriet Wallis (1854-1939) in the 1890s. For further details please see Pioneer, Volume 1, No. 3, April 2014: “Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists’ National Union”.

[12] A photograph of Bert and Elsie Hardwick with Harry Dawson (as well as former SNU Presidents John Stewart and Harold Vigurs) laying the foundation stone of Croydon National Spiritualist Church; Bert Hardwick was the Church President (1948-1957). Please see Pioneer, Volume 3, No. 3, June 2016.

use as an educational establishment. Now, Harry devotes some of his energies to swelling the endowment fund which has been launched by Findlay to provide towards the cost of equipping this psychic school of the future.[13]

Told by a gypsy that he will live to 88, Harry seems to have many more years of service to Spiritualism before him. But he has definite advice for mediums which he would like to see acted upon now: "Do all in your power to enhance the natural gifts with which you have been endowed. Find your true bent in psychic work and specialise in that line."





[13] January 1966, SNU General Secretary Richard Ellidge: –"It was early in 1945 that Mr J. Arthur Findlay first approached the Union regarding Stansted Hall when it was occupied by the Red Cross as a Convalescent Home and when he resided at Rockingham Castle, Market Harborough. This was followed in 1950 by personal contact with W. Lorraine Haig, then President of the Union, who appointed a President's Committee to investigate and report on a College for Spiritualism. But it was not until January, 1954, that Mr Findlay wrote to Mr H. Dawson, who had been elected President six months previously, followed by meeting at Stansted, that a direct and close liaison between the Hall and the Union was established. [...]" Dawson notes, regarding the photograph shown of himself and Arthur Findlay, that it was taken in 1953 or 1954: "during discussions on the future of Arthur's Gift". Given the above information it would appear to be 1954.

The ‘President’s Farthing’

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* It can be noted in the above profile of Harry Dawson:

> “So he set out upon the road that was to lead him to the highest office among the Spiritualists of Britain—and an inheritance of one farthing. For many years that most humble of coins was the symbol of office carried by the president of the Spiritualists’ National Union—the post now held by the salutary septuagenarian of whom you are reading.”

It is interesting to note that some 26 years earlier, at the twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Union, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster and the Artworkers’ Guild, Queens Square, Southampton Row, London, on July 2nd and 3rd 1927 respectively, SNU President Robert A. Owen was presented with a new Presidential badge. Below is quoted from Pioneer, Volume 1, No. 3, April 2014:

PRESENTATION OF A NEW PRESIDENTIAL BADGE.

One of the most interesting events of the Conference took place on Sunday morning, July 3rd, when Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, of the York Spiritualist Church, presented the Union with a gold Presidential Badge. The Badge is in blue enamel on gold, with the name of the Union round the edge, the centre design showing the Setting Sun over the Book of Nature, with the words Light and Truth standing in relief. The back is suitably inscribed to commemorate the gift. It has a bar above on which is inscribed the word President.

Mrs. Richardson, in making the presentation, said that two farthings were once found in the collection at an annual meeting. She had discovered that one of them was put in by a resident of York. Whether the actual coin, which had served as a President’s Badge for many years, was the York coin, she did not know, but it was appropriate that since the humblest coin of the realm had come from her city, a gift of the pure metal, gold, should also come from that ancient city, so closely identified with the introduction of Christianity into England. Mr. Richardson took up the thread and expressed the pleasure it gave him to have the honour of bestowing upon the Union some token of adornment to mark the growing honour and dignity of the great Movement of Spiritualism.

By the unanimous desire of the Conference Mrs. Richardson pinned the badge on the coat of Mr. Owen, who had been elected the previous day to the office of President for the third year in succession.

Mr. Owen returned thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Richardson for their generous gift; Mrs. Raymond and Mrs. Greenwood heartily supporting.

G.F.B.
(George Berry, SNU President 1920-1922)

Can any reader shed any more light on this historic farthing, which once served as the ‘symbol of office’?



A former monetary unit and coin of the UK, withdrawn in 1961, equal to a quarter of an old penny.



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JOE BENJAMIN



Joe Benjamin died in 1983, aged 68. A medium for over fifty years, Joe's evidential clairvoyance was probably first brought before the public in a "Psychic News" article on May 14th 1938: "An evidential communication was received through Joseph Benjamin, a young Jewish trance medium who was present." Joe demonstrated at two London venues for decades, Sunday meetings at Alliance Hall, Westminster and on Tuesdays at a hall in Kentish Town, London.

Benjamin was well known for his stunning mediumship, colourful platform delivery and a wonderful sense of humour in his demonstrations, earning himself numerous descriptions such as 'exhilarating as champagne' or 'as rare as a fine liqueur'. In 1979 Maurice Barbanell presented a Silver Cup to Joseph Benjamin as Psychic News 'Spiritualist of the Year'. The cup is displayed in the Britten Memorial Museum & Library at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall, along with a large bust of Benjamin and photographs, etc. donated by his family in June 2001. The photograph shown in the article below was taken at the Alliance Hall, Westminster in 1977.

Below is an interview by the "Two Worlds" correspondent Philip Paul, published on February 1st 1958, page 7:

Joseph Benjamin tells:

HOW I SEE THE DEAD

"THEY ARE REAL AND SOLID"

AS exhilarating as champagne; as Cockney as mild-and-bitter; as rare as a fine liqueur. Slight, black-haired, bright-eyed Joseph Benjamin is all of these things. He is as familiar a part of the London psychic scene as mediumship itself.

Twice each seven days he meets his public *en masse*, at meetings in Westminster and Kentish Town. Year in, year out, his admirers brave rain, snow, fog and storm to jam his halls to the doors and smother him with an affection that often nears adoration.

Joe revels in it all. It is his life, embracing for him the elation of achievement and the ambition of endeavour. Yet he knows he must never relax, never depend upon the laurels of the past.

Human dynamo

For those who love him are also critical. Quickly, they notice any shortcoming, any sign of a decline in the standard of his performance. This, and a deep-rooted conviction that his work is worth while, keeps Joe on the ball.

But how does this gesticulating and bespectacled human dynamo go on drawing gasps from his listeners from one decade to the next? Who tells him what to say? What are his sensations while he demonstrates? Who, for him, are the most dead, the "dead" or the living?

A quest for the answers to these problems kept me in Joe's East-End home until two a.m. the other day. By that time two friends who were visiting him were nodding with weariness, his wife Kitty was rubbing sleepy eyes and I was wondering whether I could keep awake to drive myself home.

"What about that?"

But Joe was still talking, still waving his arms, still jumping from his chair to pace agitatedly back and forth, still cracking jokes, still spinning anecdotes—and, in between it all, still giving me flashes of clairvoyance . . .

More astonishing still, they were flashes that insinuated themselves beyond my critical faculties, finding, now and then, that tender inner fastness that, when touched, cries, "This could be something."

Each time I paused for thought Joe would utter delighted exclamations, for I had been arguing with him about the hypothetical sources of his information. "*That's* not telepathy, is it?" he would cry. Or: "What about that, then? I couldn't have known that, could I? I didn't get that out of your diary, did I? How could I have got it except from the other world?"

Psychology as aid

His questions symbolise his personality; simple directness allied with shrewd conviction. He is not artless, and allowed himself the boast: "I am a psychologist as well as a medium, you know. Otherwise, I'd never hold my audiences."

"How do you see these spirit people?"

His answer was unfaltering: "Usually, I sense them with my mind, but sometimes it is objective and sometimes subjective. Mental impressions are the most important part of it. To me, the spirit people are just as real and just as solid as the real people I am looking at."

About his clairaudience, he commented: "I hear with my ear and with my mind also. I am not conscious of guides, but I often get information by means of a sort of symbolism. For instance, if there is something to do with property, I see a lawyer. If there is something about a Jew, I see a rabbi. If you get a bad man, something inside you tells you he is the wrong one. When you are going to give a sitting, you know at the start if it is going to be a good one or a bad one.

Two-way flow

"A medium's conscious and subconscious faculties are influenced by a two-way flow. Under the spell of mediumship, some power gives him the ability to differentiate between telepathic thoughts from the audience, his own subconscious and messages from the other world."

I asked why it was sometimes difficult to give full names and addresses. Again, his answer was immediate. "It all depends upon the communicator," he said. "It depends upon his personality and his degree of advancement. I cannot give what I do not get. But so much comes in this symbol form. For example, if I see a Chinese lighting candles I know there will be a death."

When I inquired how he knew where to place messages, he said, “The person concerned in the hall is surrounded by a radiance.” Music and singing were helpful to him, he added, but he could work without them. “Vibrations are atmosphere. If a sad song is played, I pick up emotional souls. My ideal conditions are sympathy and silence.”

“Yes,” was his answer to the query, “Do you register physically in your person the symptoms suffered by communicators before passing? ” To the inquiry, “What, to you, is the difference between people in the audience and communicators?” he replied, “The communicators are brighter! ”

When he must stop



Describing the means by which he knows when he must end a demonstration, he said: “I know I must stop when I can no longer see the spirit people. But invariably my time has gone before that happens. When it does happen, I can feel the power shut off. Then, I am no longer a medium but just an ordinary man.”

“What.” I inquired, “do you feel as a result of recipients’ responses to what you tell them? Does a non co-operative recipient put you off?”

“No,” he said, decisively. “A recipient’s answers do not make any difference to me, except that when someone will not admit something straight away you have to work harder to hammer it home.”

I sheltered behind a chair when he said he could see the auras of living people. These, he said, were always in colour, the predominating shade determining the type of character of the person concerned. Blue, he told me, meant healing; green, faith; gold, a firm foundation; red, protection.

Care from beyond

In the matter of going into trance, he affirmed: “When I do, the intelligences look after me. They wouldn’t for example, put me into that state on a bus or anywhere else like that.

“My sensations when in trance are semi-conscious. I have sensations like floating and falling. I believe that, with trance, the less knowledge there is in the medium’s mind the better it is for the guide.”

Sometimes, he said, he remembers the words uttered through him while he is in trance. In the early days of his mediumship, however, it had been a state of complete oblivion. The return to consciousness was invariably accompanied by a feeling of weariness.

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Philip Paul continues this theme in the "Two Worlds", February 15th 1958, page 6, with the veteran mental medium Bertha Harris, born in August 1889 in Cheshire; Bertha Amelia Hughes married Robert Harris in 1918. A profile by Philip Paul is published, along with other information on Harris and her work, in Psypioneer, Volume 12, No. 1, January-February 2016.



Bertha Harris tells:

HOW I SEE THE DEAD

"LIKE standing beside yourself like being under an anaesthetic." This is how tall, determined Bertha Harris describes her sensations during trance.

A veteran worker on Spiritualist platforms, she has demonstrated her gifts in many countries. A staunch defender of the principles in which she believes, she is vociferous when provoked.

She is no simpering goody-goody. When, during our interview, I asked her what conditions she found most suitable for her mediumship and how she would define the Spiritualist term "vibrations," she gave a warning growl.

"Vibrations," she announced with emphasis, "are an excuse for undeveloped mediumship. The singing of songs doesn't help me at all. I often get impatient because of all this hymn-singing.

TEMPERAMENT

" 'Vibrations' are nothing more nor less than temperament on the medium's part. All I want when I am demonstrating is for the person I speak to to answer me."

That's Bertha Harris now, in focus. Down-to-earth, matter-of-fact, and don't-give-me-any-of-that-nonsense,-young-man. It was with the same kind of directness that she waded into the primary questions.

"In clairvoyance, I see objectively. The forms I see appear solid and are complete in every detail. But I can easily distinguish between the dead and the living, because I see the dead more distinctly than the living. The blacks are blacker. More vivid. There seems to be more 3-D about them.

"With clairaudience. I hear it actually as a conversation, with my ear. The guides have a system of co-operation with the communicators. I think there must be some arrangement whereby the guides select the most suitable communicators, otherwise you would get a confusion that no medium could sort out.

The guides certainly help the communicators to get information over concisely. A guide will often transmit messages on behalf of communicators, especially when you are not quite sure what a spirit is saying."

Like the villain twirling his moustaches before pouncing on the helpless maiden, I lashed out with: "But how do you know these are communications from the dead? How can you distinguish between telepathy, your own subconscious mind and spirit communications?"

She didn‘t flinch, but for a moment her eyes closed as if she were offering up a prayer for patience. “It’s very simple. First of all, you are fully aware of your own subconscious, because of your development as a medium. It is an entirely different *modus operandi*. The spirit message is very forceful, but your subconscious is subservient. It is also easy to select telepathic impressions, because these come over in waves. You immediately sort them out.”

And why, I queried, did mediums often find it difficult to give the full names and addresses of communicators? Again she needed no prompting.

“I think there are several reasons. In the course of years, I have found I have the ability to get full names, whereas I didn’t in my younger days. Therefore, it seems as though it is of development.

But I will say this. If you get names and addresses, you don’t get much else. The spirit people don’t always concentrate on their names and addresses, but when they do it seems to take a great deal of their power.

SYMBOLISM

“Sometimes the information I get comes in symbol form. Once, I saw a bottle of brandy. It turned out that the communicator’s name was Mrs. Brandy.”

She went on to tell me that “a pin-pointing light, like, a baby rocket,” indicates to her the people in her audiences to whom she is to give messages. “Sometimes it is so quick that you miss it. You don‘t get it twice.”

For Bertha, there is no such thing as the power running out.” She chuckled when I asked her how she knows when the time has come to end her demonstrations. “When the chairman tells me!” she said.

“Unquestionably,” she told me, “some communicators are better at giving evidence than others. But it is essential that the medium should be quick. Sometimes communicators with strong personalities will try to gate-crash into a message you are already giving.”

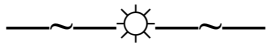
Like many other mediums, Bertha says she is greatly helped by the fact that she is able to see the coloured emanations, or aura, which surround living bodies. But her code for the meanings of the colours depends very much upon the whereabouts of the colours.

CATALEPSY

“For example, green round the hands means that the person is a good gardener, but if the green is round the eyes it means they are full of jealousy.” “Pink”, she said, signifies “a very bright, light-hearted and gay sort of person,” while shades of grey “represent things that are not so pleasant.”

Trance, she told me, was a little more complex than fully conscious mediumship. First, to enter trance, she found it necessary to “submit to relaxation.” During catalepsy, her own voice sounds to her to be “faraway, like a semi-sleeping condition.” And, on recovering full consciousness after trance, she feels “cold and hungry and small and achy.”

“You think, ‘How dull and dingy everything looks.’ So it seems that when you are in trance you are in happier surroundings.”





SPIRITUALIST HEALERS OF THE PAST

Frederick Joseph Jones

In the previous issue we looked at the 'Psychic Surgeon', Jesse J. Thomas, whose healing guide, 'Dr. Robert', operated on the etheric bodies of sick patients. Similarly, Frederick Joseph Jones was claimed in the Spiritualist press in 1933 as "the most remarkable psychic healer known to Spiritualism in recent years". Jones died on October 13th 1933. He was still young, around 48 years old.

There is today little information on his healing work; it can be noted that in May 1924 he was charged under the Vagrancy Act as a self-styled "faith healer". Jones' patients testified they had improved their health under his treatment and Jones took no fee for his services – the charge was dismissed. A former Wesleyan missionary described in "Psychic News" his visit to Fred Jones in the issue of September 9th 1933:

> DURING the past few days, I have experienced some of the strangest incidents in my life.
>
> As part of my investigation, I have been to Spiritualist Sunday services, a circle, a healing circle, and a meeting for psychometry.
>
> We met for the healing service in an upper room at Marylebone House, Russell Square. Most of the people went there for healing. F. J. Jones is the medium of Medicine Man, who ministers to the sick. He works in cooperation with a band of assistants. I gathered that these people provided an extra force or power of some kind.
>
> Mr. Jones looked a very tired and weary man, in striking contrast to his assistants, who all looked most robust. After the preliminaries, the medium sat down for a short time, then, rising, spoke in a deep, resonant voice and uttered a prayer of singular depth and beauty.
>
> **PSYCHIC HEALING**
>
> No surgical instruments were used in the treatment of the sick. The scene in the body of the hall was very much like that in the waiting-room of a hospital.
>
> A young man sat next to me, and as we watched we talked. He had very little experience of Spiritualism. A friend of his, whom he admired very much, had become a Spiritualist, and he therefore believed there must be something in it. He had not been to a healing service before.
>
> His lady friend was ill, however, and as she could not come along, he had brought her handkerchief in a sealed package. The medical practitioner had given a diagnosis. Medicine Man was to be asked if he would effect a cure.

My new friend reported that not only had Medicine Man confirmed the doctor's report, but had given particulars of a treatment that should provide a cure.

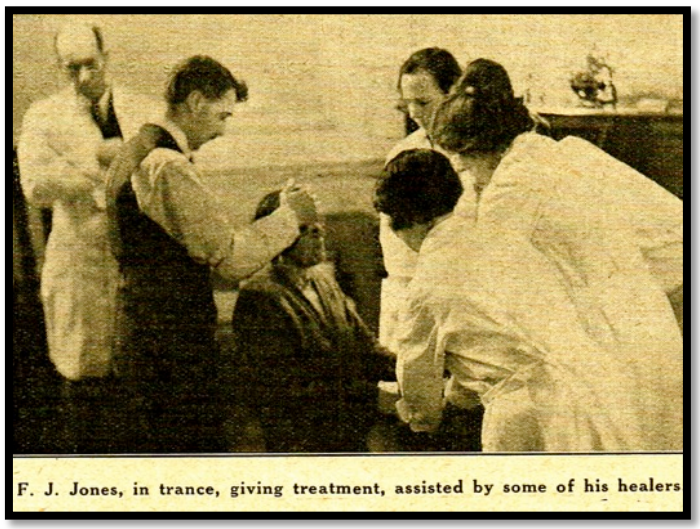
It was quite late when I left, but a crowd still remained.

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James Arthur Findlay's published works are of significant historic value in various avenues, and we can note in his 1955 autobiography, "Looking Back", that it was a meeting with Fred Jones that created his interest in psychic healing. Below is taken from Chapter Seven – Stansted Hall (1930-1936):

HEALING CIRCLE IN STANSTED
RECALLS ARTHUR FINDLAY

Psychic healing is a subject which has greatly interested me since the time the psychic healer F. J. Jones first came to our neighbourhood. He came by car once a week to a house in Stansted, and there gave healing to all who attended his healing circle. His power of healing was most impressive as was his gift in trance to diagnose an illness. He went into trance, and stood in the centre of the circle made up of about a dozen people who had come to be healed. I sat outside the circle and watched what took place. He went from one to another describing accurately the ailment, no questions being asked, and held his hand on the place affected. So successful was he that the local doctor came, and then sent his patients to be diagnosed and healed. The doctor became a firm believer in this form of healing, so much so that patients came to Jones for diagnosis and healing from far and wide.



F. J. Jones, in trance, giving treatment, assisted by some of his healers

Let me give an example of what took place. Jones, entranced, would stand in front of a patient, and his control would say, "You have had an operation which did you no good." "Yes," came the reply. "The surgeon cut you open from here to here," indicating the place and direction of the incision. "Yes," was the reply. "Well," the control went on, "that was not the way to cure you. What is wrong with you is this," and an explanation would follow, to end in treatment which the patient later acknowledged had cured her. The woman was fully dressed so that Jones's control must have seen through her clothes to her body to describe the previous operation, which was known to no other earth person present except herself. 'That is an example of what went on at this healing circle in Stansted, but he conducted others, his largest one being at Marylebone House in London.[14]

[14] This appears to be a reference to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, which was strongly supported by Arthur Findlay. The Marylebone Spiritualist Association (M.S.A.), London, was founded in 1872, being one of the earliest societies in London. On March 4th 1955 a contract was signed for a 72-year lease for new premises situated at 33 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QB. On February 24th 1960 the M.S.A., changed its name to the 'Spiritualist Association of Great Britain' (S.A.G.B.). (Information taken from Roy Stemman's "One Hundred Years of Spiritualism", 1972.)

Let me record the case of a remarkable cure which I followed at the time. Jones was the medium, and the details are accurate, being taken down from start to finish. In 1932 a girl of four years of age, named Doreen, had measles. On May 16th the doctor said that pneumonia had set in, and four days later she developed meningitis. Her parents were told she might die at any minute. The doctor called in a specialist on May 25th and he confirmed the diagnosis of meningitis. He agreed that there was no hope of the child living until the end of the week. The parents called in another doctor, who also agreed that there was no hope, and that nothing further could be done.

When all hope was abandoned, the child's grandmother, who herself had received great benefit from psychic healing, decided that at least no harm could be done by calling in the psychic healer, F. J. Jones. As Jones dealt with dozens of cases a day, he could not go to see the child, but he held in his hand for some time a handkerchief which was taken immediately and placed over Doreen's head. Whenever the handkerchief was so placed Doreen stopped screaming. The next day her temperature was down and another handkerchief, which had been held by Jones, was placed on her head.

Thinking the case was hopeless, the doctor did not call again until May 27th, and was very mystified at the child's improvement. He was not told the reason. On the next day, May 28th, he said her improvement was marvellous. The same afternoon Jones called to see her for the first time. He went into trance, and his spirit control treated her by keeping Jones's hands on her neck. The control, through the mouth of Jones, then said that he would draw the disease from the head through the back of the skull and, as there would be much pus discharged, he asked that the hair be shaved at the back of the head and that, when suppuration started, the wounds be treated with a mixture of olive oil and chalk.

That evening the discharge commenced from eighteen places on the part of the skull which had been treated by the spirit control. The doctor, when he called on May 30th, was told that the grandmother was treating the child with an African remedy. The spirit control claimed to have been an African medicine man on earth. As the earth doctor could do nothing himself, he did not interfere. On June 3rd the doctor said it was a miracle that the child was still alive. On June 8th and 9th Jones, in trance, again treated the child. On June 17th Doreen was able to speak for the first time since her illness, and on June 23rd she went out for the first time for a walk with her grandmother, soon to become strong and well again.

How can we explain this extraordinary cure after all hope had been abandoned? Accepting the claim made by those who control healing mediums in trance that they were doctors on earth, and still have the urge to heal those who suffer on earth, we, at least, can conclude this. That the medium's body is used by the etheric doctor to conduct something, just as a copper wire conducts electricity. Further that, in some or all cases, the medium's hands transmit rays of different frequencies to our physical rays which act on the etheric body of the patient, and this in turn acts on the physical body. Handkerchiefs can be impregnated by them, and so carried to the patient. Especially interesting was the effect the handkerchiefs held by the medium had on Doreen, and yet it was not new, because we read in Acts xix, 12, that Paul was a healing medium, "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases departed from them."

By experience I myself know that rays pass from the medium, because I have felt them pass from a healing medium's hand to my spine. The medium was Mrs. Nan Mackenzie and, as her hand passed up and down my spine with my clothes on, it gave off a burning penetrating heat which was hard to bear. Up and down it went along with her hand, and

there was no electric gadget about for this to be explained in a normal way. She was in trance from first to last, and her control told me how he used different rays for different ailments.

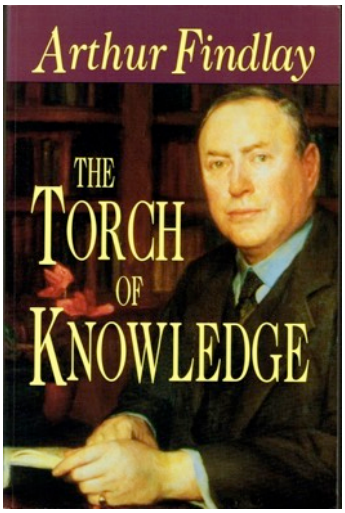
A friend, after thrombosis some years ago, lost her strength and vigour, and the doctor told her she would be in poor health for the rest of her life. She went to this medium and her spine was treated, as was mine. After four treatments she was strong and well, and had no ill-effects from her thrombosis; in fact, since this treatment she has never been in better health in her life. And now I shall turn to quite another subject.



Fred Jones, entranced by his healing guide "Medicine Man", treats a patient at the MSA

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In 1936 Findlay wrote his only novel, "The Torch of Knowledge"; the characters themselves are fictional. Findlay emphasises "the fact that all the psychic phenomena, which run through this story, have actually happened. What I have done has been to change their setting and the details." A good detailed knowledge of Spiritualism and mediumship can be gained by reading this book, with an interesting, instructive and, in some places, thrilling story of spirit communication. Below I have quoted from a conversation about psychic healing; Dr and Mrs Cureall are circle members and the doctor is a psychic healer, while Angela Bridge is an upcoming medium. It is taken from Chapter III, At Sureway Court, pages 96-98 (SNU Publications edition):[15]



Dr. and Mrs. Cureall were, as usual, delightful guests, and the conversation at dinner flowed like a gurgling stream.

The doctor, who was sitting next to Angela, was interesting her in some of the cures he had effected by means of psychic healing.

"Most certainly it is successful," he remarked, in answer to her enquiry. "I know of some of the most remarkable cures taking place after all other means had been tried. I have often remarked that if people suffering from certain complaints went first to a psychic healer how much easier it would be to cure them. As it is, they try every other means and then as a last resort they visit the psychic healer."

What, exactly, is psychic healing?" asked Angela.

"Psychic healing is the healing of the body through the etheric body. We have an etheric duplicate, every cell in our body is duplicated, and bodily disease is due to these cells being unhealthy and not functioning properly. Earth doctors try to cure the physical body only. Etheric doctors cure the physical through the etheric by stimulating the etheric cells in such a way that the physical cells become again healthy."

"But how does the psychic healer know what is wrong and what to do?" enquired Angela.

He, himself, does not know anything because he is in trance and the control of his body is taken over by an etheric doctor who diagnoses the illness, and then either cures it by passing healing rays through the medium to the patient by touch or passes, or he prescribes what the patient is to do or take."

"Tell me about a cure which you know has really taken place by this means," said Angela.

"Well, one of our greatest healing mediums, F. J. Jones, who unfortunately died a few years ago, could tell when in trance and under the control of his Etheric doctor the history of the past illnesses of the people who came to be cured, without, remember this, asking the patient a single question."

[15] Available from the online Arthur Findlay Shop: http://arthurfindlayshop.org/

“How remarkable; do tell me more,” Angela remarked.

“Well, I shall tell you of a case I myself took to him. A woman patient of mine had recently undergone a serious operation, which had failed to cure her, and she awaited her turn in Jones’ consulting room, quite unknown to anyone present, except myself.

Jones, in trance, when her turn came, lightly ran his fingers over her clothes. He asked no questions, but promptly informed her that she had had several operations. Then he traced over her clothes the exact course taken by the surgeon’s knife.

The symptoms, both before and after the operations, were correctly stated. ‘No such operations were necessary,’ the Etheric doctor said, through the mouth of Jones, ‘but I can cure you’; and prescribed a certain treatment which effected a complete cure. I could tell you of many other cases similar to this.”

“How wonderful!” exclaimed Angela. “The fact that he could tell her past medical history is remarkable in itself. Doctors should use mediumship in diagnosing difficult cases.”

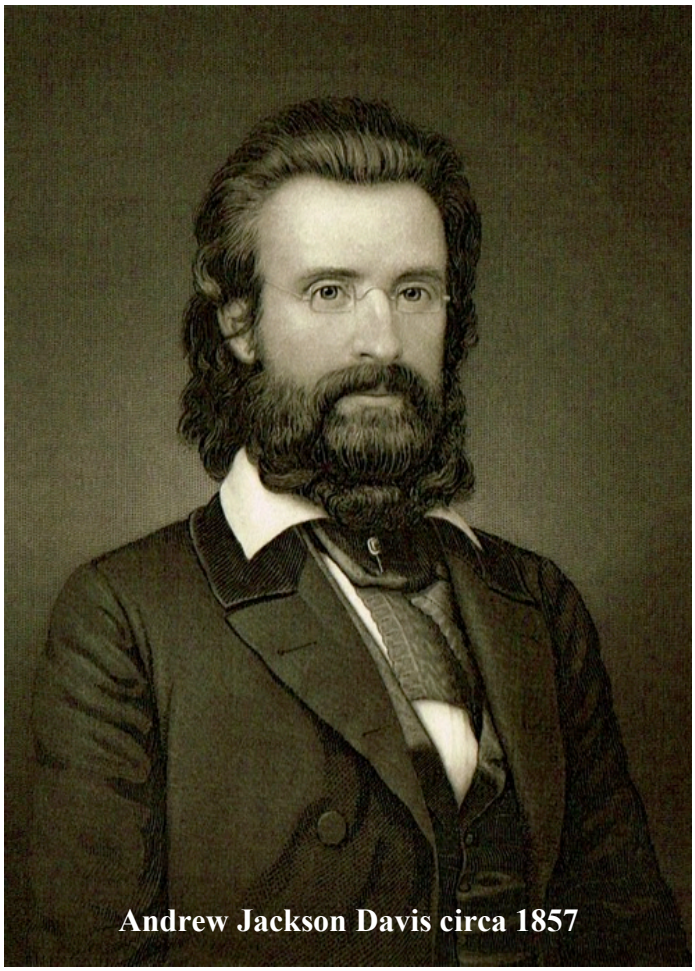
“They will, in time,” answered the doctor. “It is all so new, and healing mediums are so few; but they are increasing. More and more people are finding that they have the power of healing by passes and touch. They can give out healing rays which affect the etheric body and through it the physical body. It is, however, only when you are in the presence of a powerful trance healing medium that you realise that more than the medium’s own healing force is in play. Then you feel the rays passing from the medium to the patient. I have had to draw my hand away on occasions because they gave the sensation of an electric shock.”



Andrew Jackson Davis

(1826-1910)

"WHERE IS THE SPIRIT WORLD" - *We are in it!*



Andrew Jackson Davis circa 1857

Andrew Jackson Davis is sometimes not easy to read with some of his terminology, such as the word 'Univercœlum',[16] but his philosophy and writings underpin much of the philosophy of Modern Spiritualism. Davis' books, around thirty, are an encyclopedia, which many early Spiritualists regarded as expressing the essential principles of science, philosophy and religion and of immense value. Prior to Hydesville he wrote in his two-volume work, "Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind", published in 1847, page 675:

"It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres – and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established …"

Davis's work was largely inspired from the spirit world by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). In 1741, aged 53, Swedenborg entered into a spiritual phase, which consisted of dreams and visions, and three years later he claimed he could freely visit heaven and hell and communicate with angels, demons and spirits. He termed himself a "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ". In 1758 he published "Heaven and Hell". Later, in 1787, a group of his followers formally established the 'Church of the New Jerusalem' or Swedenborgianism.

[16] Part II, Davis' "Principles of Nature …", page 121; the work is available on-line as a PDF download: "IN THE BEGINNING, the Univercœlum was one boundless, undefinable, and unimaginable ocean of LIQUID FIRE! The most vigorous and ambitious imagination is not capable of forming an adequate conception of the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. There was one vast expanse of liquid substance. It was without bounds—inconceivable—and with qualities and essences incomprehensible. This was the original condition of MATTER. It was without forms; for it was but *one* Form. It had not motions; but it was an eternity of Motion. It was without parts; for it was a Whole. Particles did not exist; but the Whole was as *one* Particle. There were not Suns, but it was one Eternal Sun. It had a beginning, and it was without end. It had not length; for it was a Vortex of one Eternity. It had not circles; for it was one infinite Circle. It had not disconnected power; but it was the very essence of all Power. Its inconceivable magnitude and constitution were such as not to develop forces, but Omnipotent Power!"

However, some aspects of Swedenborg's teachings appealed to other groups and were in some respects continued by Andrew Jackson Davis. Swedenborg revealed that the afterlife consisted of three Heavens, three Hells and an interim place – the world of the spirits – where everyone went directly upon dying and eventually graduated to other like-minded spirits in the different spheres. Swedenborg's descriptions were vivid:

Life was much the same in the Spirit World as on earth Cities, handsome buildings, parks, trees, flowers etc

James Morse asked some leading Spiritualists, "Where is the Spirit World", a question he asked Andrew Jackson Davis. Morse published his reply in the "Spiritual Review", which Morse founded and edited, in April 1900. The monthly publication continued until circa May 1902. Below is taken from December 1901, Vol. III, No. 14:

" WHERE IS THE SPIRIT WORLD"

We are in it!

ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

You will kindly believe me when I affirm that, during the past fifteen years my time and perceptions have been almost completely mortgaged to constant labours in the medical profession, and this, too, to the partial suspension of long-range clairvoyance, attended with less and less association with the "real reality" of the spirit world, and with its myriad inhabitants. Nevertheless, I am at no time without unmistakable vision and aural evidences of what is most essential and imperishable.

At your request I will write explicitly and briefly; affirming of my own knowledge and belief; not undertaking the least approach to argument, and with only a few illustrative remarks.

I enter the superior condition; sometimes with a total loss of sensuous consciousness; which is a perfect equivalent to what is termed "death"—all is suspended, except the continuation of the automatic vital forces, which constitutes an external (bodily), life preserver.

And, lo! here I am in the Spirit World. Yet I have not moved an inch into space. In the Spirit World I behold the interior of the Natural World. Here are the houses and the occupants; here are all the animals, both great and small; all known insects, microbes, the dwellers of air and tenants of the seas; here are—everything which is visible or known to the outer senses in the outer sphere. In a world like this, and with the spiritual senses opened to it, and with one's understanding also opened to comprehend the sight, one naturally feels like a spirit, and surrounded with what is really and truly spiritual. Being in the Spirit World (without the least alteration of one's relative position), one realizes the whole description of the illuminated Swedenborg, and understands what is meant by the "passing away" of the old (outer) heavens and earth, and the coming in splendour of what is "New."

But, behold! As I am rapt in profound contemplation of all this "new heavens and new earth," I suddenly see a beautiful assemblage which seems far away, and yet I inwardly know that the association is within the gravitation of this earth, or rather, Spirit World. Presently I observe one (often three or more), ascending obliquely and entering the waiting group. A few seconds more the entire brilliant company turn from the terrestial sphere, and facing the other way, protecting and guiding in their very midst, the one or more passing from (earth) to the

Spirit World—thus all soar or sail onward, far, far off toward the central Sun of the Univercœlum!

Whither? I am told they are *en route* to the vast second sphere of existence, by many celestial personages of refinement and wisdom, called "The Summer Land." One would say, not following the sublime flight of the angel visitants, "Oh! now you wrap our judgments in impenetrable mystery." I reply—nay, not so illogical, good friend. The infinite universe is revolving around countless centres (or great central suns), each of which is a Univercœlum, wherein dwelleth for each system a "Great Positive Mind," or rather, to employ a common illustration, each universe is from a fountain of unchangeable spiritual forces (Love and Wisdom), like a king enthroned as ruler of each perfectly organized kingdom.

"Where is the Summer Land?" Wait for the answer until we are all a "little larger grown." Give yourself time enough to unfold and expand. Wait till your little quart measure will become developed enough to hold at least a bushel! We have found the location of the Spirit World. Unknowingly, we live in it every day and night; but the good Swedenborg *knowingly* lived in it many years.